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ABSTRACT

This book uses an examination of admissions policies, especially affirmative action, at the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley), to explore higher education and its role in public debates about access, equality, and social change. Chapter 1, "The Admissions Furor: Battle Cries or More Confusion?" casts the personal side of college application and college matriculation against the backdrop of current political trends and double standards. Chapter 2, "What's at Stake in the Drive for Access?" looks at society's investment in higher education and the "human capital" of the future workforce. It reviews the expansion of the higher education industry and examines the link between the historically defined dream of equality and the difficulties encountered by modern higher education as it seeks to implement this dream. Chapter 3, "Who Gets In?" links the history of university admissions to traditional American ideals of unity and individual equality and then to modern ideals of diversity and multicultural parity. Chapter 4, "The 'Nasty Problem' of Fairness," presents a profile of UC Berkeley admissions developed from a study involving interviews and surveys of students, faculty, and administrators in the year preceding the first official effort to repeal affirmative action policies. Chapter 5, "Frustrated Students and Teachers in the Diverse Classroom," looks at diversity, disability, average ability, high ability, and the effects of accommodation to diversity on classroom and university policies. Chapter 6, "Shameful Admissions: Offering Less and Less to More and More," touches on evidence that higher education is in decline. Chapter 7, "Can We Serve Them All?" juxtaposes and merges views regarding diversity, excellence, and opportunity. Lastly, chapter 8, "Rethinking Pathways to the American Dream," offers alternative visions for the future. (Contains 338 references.) (JB)